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AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

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A Foundling At My Table

The bird feedtable outside my living room window has been a lively source of pleasure for three years now. But by far the most unique incident I've yet observed on the table took place this past spring.

Although I'm familiar with some dozen species of regular visitors, for the first time a pair of song sparrows appeared consistently during April. All day the male's rippling song from the feedtable's edge or from the nearby shrubs delighted me. The pair built their nest in a neighbor's almond tree that grew out of a blackberry tangle. I never saw that nest; yet I knew when the eggs hatched! For now all day until dusk one or the other of these birds came to the table every three or four minutes. Frantically the song sparrow would fill his bill with the rolled oats, look hastily about, and then quickly take off toward the nest. House Finches, with young in nests to be fed, also visited the table regularly; however, they chattered freely, lacking the insistent urgency that seemed to drive the song sparrows. The frequency of the song sparrows' trips and their nervous apprehension seemed to imply that in the nest was an abnormal hunger, a crying offspring that demanded food out of all proportion to the native ability of these slender song birds to carry it. "Um um," I thought, "Those birds are following instinct blindly, and yet they sense something amiss. I'll wait and see."

On June 8, the burly, raucous bird that followed the female song sparrow to the table confirmed my suspicions. She had raised a cowbird! Right in town, too! My feedtable is only forty feet from a busy street in Napa where automobiles and busses speed by. I recalled then having first heard the gurgling male cowbird on May 21, as he was perched on the top of a fir tree close by the feedtable. I'd identified him readily by his glossy black body and distinctly brown head. And thereafter he and his drab, plural mates had fed at my table. I'd never expected, however, to watch the raising of his offspring.

But here was this young cowbird, three times as big as the foster parents, who worked feverishly gathering oats and stretching up to place them in the cave-like mouth. The baby continued to flutter his big wings and to screech his demanding call. If she flew away in desperation, he tagged right along behind her. For several days he was fed at the table. I noticed that if she really denied him, he was perfectly able to feed himself; but he preferred to harass the song sparrow into feeding him. Shortly thereafter she brought her own young to the table—one lone undersized song sparrow. Curiously this one, her own, she forced to feed himself; but then he didn't have the capacity to yell as lustily as the foster offspring.

The young cowbird fed regularly at the table among the housefinches. He was

larger and bullied his way, eating even more than the prodigious feeder, the California Towhee. As he grew, he began to look more like a cowbird. Finally he was gone. Now I'm wondering if I'll have another cowbird at my feedtable next spring.

—Esther Sym Henrie

October Meeting

The 325th meeting of the Audubon Association of the Pacific was held Thursday evening, October 12th at 7:30 p.m. in the Public Library Auditorium, San Francisco, California. President Arthur H. Myer presided.

Miss Ivander MacIver, Treasurer, reported the new Junior membership of the following: Douglas Harbey, 2393 Virginia St., Berkeley 4, and Kai Martensen, 2131 Spaulding Ave., Berkeley 3.

The President brought a copy of The Sanderling, bulletin of the Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society, edited by Miss Florence Morrow, Carmel, California.

Mr. J. J. Webb moved that the Audubon Association subscribe ten dollars to the James Moffitt Memorial Library and Research Room in the California Academy of Science. Mr. Walter W. Bradley seconded the motion.

Field Observations were made by Mr. J. J. Webb, Mr. Walter W. Bradley, and Master Paul Altrocchi.

The speaker of the evening, Mr. Joseph Dixon, honorary president of the Audubon Association, noted author and scientist, spoke on "Birding at Crater Lake National Park". Mr. Dixon illustrated his talk with colored slides of the bird country of Oregon.

More than sixty guests enjoyed the lecture.

The meeting adjourned at 9 o'clock.

Jean Bradford Fay, Recording Secretary

Annual Census

Mr. Herman V. Leffler, chairman of the Dec. 24, 1944 census of San Francisco birds, is forming parties to cover the various sections involved. He would appreciate hearing from members planning to take part. The day chosen for the census comes on a Sunday and though just preceding Christmas Day, it offers opportunity for some to give their services who might not otherwise be able to. This census is the particular responsibility of our association. Will volunteers please call Mr. Leffler at OLympic 0270 or write him at 520 Forest St., Oakland 9.

Captain and Mrs. T. E. Reynolds are now to be reached at U. S. Naval Hospital, Fort Eustis, Virginia. Mrs. Reynolds writes that they are hoping to do something tangible about Easttern birds soon and will report to A. A. P. friends from time to time. We will be glad to hear from them.

October Field Trip

The October Field Trip of the Association was taken on Sunday, the 15th, to Ross, Phoenix Lake and Marin Municipal Water District territory much the same as the June trip. Fifteen members and twelve guests present covered the territory carefully yet the usual long list for this territory was not forthcoming.

Early morning fog cleared by the time the group arrived from San Francisco at Ross station with the result our finest birding was soon thereafter. The first few blocks of this walk usually yield perching birds in greater numbers than other territory on the walk and it was true this morning.

Except for the chain across the road below Lake Lagunitas we were able to cover all the usual territory on this walk, going up Shaver grade and down Eldridge. (We will not be allowed to lunch along the way as usual at the end of Lagunitas Road as no picnicking is allowed.)

This is the first October trip to this territory, as the greater number of our trips in October of recent years have been to Lake Merced.

The Bell Sparrow is a new bird on the list for this territory as far as known, and was seen in front of the keeper's home at Phoenix Lake on the return trip by Otis H. Smith, Chas. Bryant and myself.

Mrs. Otis H. Smith, Leader and Historian

Forty-two species were observed:

Pied-billed Grebe	Say Phoebe	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Mallards	Black Phoebe	Cedar Waxwing (flock)
Turkey Vulture	Crested Jay	Hutton Vireo
Cooper Hawk	California Jay	Myrtle Warblers
Desert Sparrow Hawk	Plain Titmouse	Townsend Warbler
Marsh Hawk	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Western Meadowlark
Red-tailed Hawk	Bush-tit	California Purple Finch
Coot	Slender-billed Nuthatch	Green-backed Goldfinch
Band-tailed Pigeon	California Creeper	Spotted Towhee
Anna Hummingbird	Western Winter Wren	Bell Sparrow
Western Belted Kingfisher	Hermit Thrush	Junco
Hairy Woodpecker	*Varied Thrush	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Downy Woodpecker	Western Robin	Song Sparrow
California Woodpecker	Western Golden-crowend Kinglet (flock)	
Red-shafted Flicker		*Heard by Charles Bryant

Members present were: Chas. A. Bryant, Dorothy Chandler, Jean Bradford Fay, Ethelwyn Kilham, Geo. T. Kilham, Albert Kwasky, A. H. Myer, Henry McGuckin, Florence Plymell, Tillie Papina, M. E. Sterne, Florence B. Stanton, Otis H. Smith, Anna Margaret Smith, Minnie H. Young.

Guests were: Allan Barrie, Richard Wolcott, and Douglas Wolcott, all of Ross Boy Scouts; Mrs. Joyce Barkeley, Mrs. Esther Sym Henrie, R. S. Griswold (S Club). M. H. Manassi, and Carl Franco, of Napa Audubon Club; Rose Anable, David L. Shatto, Bolander, Jr., and E. A. Mayers (Sierra Club).

October Junior Field Trip

This trip for Dimond Park did not take place due to stormy weather.

Observations

Edited by Junea W. Kelly

Lesser Scaup male, October 10, Lake Merritt, Oakland; Lincoln Sparrow, Oct. 3-4-5, 11000 Broadway Terrace, Oakland; Mrs. Vee Curtis.

3 White-tailed Kites, three miles south of Healdsburg and 1 Kite in Healdsburg, July 15; Hermit Thrush, Oct. 9, Larkspur; Mrs. Mary L. Courtright.

1 White-tailed Kite, Oct. 10, Alvarado; Mrs. Enid Austin.

1 Red-backed Sandpiper, Oct. 7, Alameda; 12 Yellow Warblers, several each Orange-crowned, Townsend, Pileolated Warblers, Sept. 23 and Oct. 4; 2 Western Tanagers Sept. 23; 5 Calaveras Warblers, 1 Red-breasted Sapsucker, 1 Sora Rail, Oct. 4, Chain of Lakes, Golden Gate Park; Junea W. Kelly.

1 pair Canvas-back Ducks, Oct. 21, 1944; 2 pairs, Oct. 22, 1944, Lake Merritt; Mrs. V. Curtis.

5 Ring-necked Ducks, 30 Coots, 4 Pintail Ducks, 2 Pied-billed Grebes, Oct. 22, 1944, Lake Temescal; Mrs. H. V. Leffler.

Novel Method of Observing Birds

Paul Altrocchi, a junior member, tells in an interesting manner about his observation of birds this summer while vacationing at his old home near Lake Michigan. He saw fifty-five species, ranging in color from the brilliantly contrasted black and red Scarlet Tanager to the dull grey Catbird, and in size from the Canada Goose to the tiny Ruby-throated Hummingbird. He tells of devising a novel scheme to get closer to the shy Sand-pipers. While swimming about fifty feet out in Lake Michigan he spotted a group of these birds on the beach. He then dove and swam under the water, coming up right next to the shore being careful to break water quietly. The Sand-pipers were not alarmed and seemed not to notice him. He was so close to them that he could actually have reached out and grabbed one. Instead he watched them quietly and observed several new things not noticed while at a distance—such as the coloring of the backs, of the bills, and of the legs.

Paul was present during the late August migration and observed eight birds not seen before during the earlier part of the summer.

November Meeting

The regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday, Nov. 9th at 7:30 p.m. in the Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco.

The speaker will be Mr. Brighton C. Caine, a past president of our Asscociation. He is assistant executive of the Oakland Area of the Council of Boy Scouts of America. He will give an illustrated talk on "Arousing Interest in Birds".

November Field Trip

The November Field Trip will be taken to the Chain of Lakes and vicinity, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, on Sunday, November the 12th.

Members and friends meet at 43rd and Fulton St., San Francisco, at 9:45 a.m. Take No. 5 McAllister car preferably; or any Geary St. car, transferring to the bus on 10th Ave. and then to McAllister.

Bring lunch and field glasses.

Leader: Miss Dorothy Chandler

November Junior Field Trip

This will be the last of this season's trips. New series will start in March of next spring. The November trip will be to Lake Merritt on Saturday the 18th. Meet leaders, Mrs. E. Richards and Miss C. A. Paroni, at 8:30 a.m. at SE corner of Shattuck and University Ave. We will take No. 6 College Avenue car and transfer at Grand Avenue to car No. 18; getting off at Perkins Street near duck-feeding enclosure. Bring lunch and glasses.

Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....Mr. Arthur H. Myer.....25 El Camino Real, Berkeley 5
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Monthly meetings second Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco.
Membership dues, payable January 1st, $3.00 per year.

Student memberships, $1.50 per year. Life memberships, $50.00.
Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.